



GRAND TRAVERSE OF THE INDIAN HIMALAYA

Cost: £2050 per person / Single supplement: £390

TOUR INFORMATION

Activity: Trekking & Walking

Tour Duration: 15 Days

Min Age For Trips: 18+



STEADY PLUS

INCLUSIONS

- 6 Nights Hotel, 8 Nights Camping
- 15 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 9 Dinners
- Fully Supported Trekking
- Flight Delhi To Leh Return

This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Spectacular flight across the Himalaya from Delhi to Leh with panoramic views of the huge glaciers and peaks of the Indian Himalaya.
- Visits to iconic monasteries including Phyang, Spituk, Shey & Thiksey
- Trek through the remote Changthang Plateau, one of the highest inhabited nomadic regions in the world
- Crossing multiple high-altitude passes
- Stunning views of surrounding snow-capped peaks
- Rich wildlife sightings: Black-necked cranes, Brahminy ducks, Wild asses (kiang), Marmots, Pikkas, Wolves and Tibetan Antelope.
- Journey concludes in the nomadic village of Korzok, overlooking beautiful azure blue Tso Moriri Lake
- A true end-to-end Himalayan traverse, not a circular trek

The trek is led by **Valerie Parkinson**. Valerie has been leading treks and expeditions in the Himalaya for over 40 years and her knowledge of the culture, religion, people and mountains is second to none. In 2008 Valerie became the first British woman to summit Manaslu (8163m) without the use of supplementary oxygen. She spends every summer (and most winters) guiding in Ladakh.

INDIA AND LADAKH

High Places began in India. 1987 saw our very first trip set off to trek in the Garhwal Himalayas in north India. We have gradually widened our destinations and now also go to Ladakh, Sikkim and to Kerala. If you are looking for an authentic, energetic yet sensitive holiday in India we are the specialists. Moreover we continue to hold India in great respect and have a deep regard for the land and its people. To travel with High Places here will disprove many of the myths you might hold and leave you with a sense of wonder and incredulity. There is a life-force in India, which we may already have lost in the West. Go and see for yourself.

The mountain kingdom of Ladakh is in the far north of India and is a remote region of wild arid valleys, rocky gorges and ridges leading to peaks over 6000m. It lies in the rain shadow north of the Himalayan divide and so avoids the influence of the monsoon. It is subject to extremes in temperature, with hot summers and very cold winters. Little wonder that the Ladakhis are a hardy and self-sufficient people. Through ingenious irrigation systems, the villages in summer are oases of green barley fields; isolated splashes of colour in the desert landscape. Prayer flags, chortens, and mani walls of carved prayer stones are a constant reminder that Buddhism is a way of life, with symbols and spirits from pre Buddhist times incorporated into the present day faith.

OVERVIEW

Ladakh, often called the Land of High Passes, is located in the Indian Himalayas. It is known for its beautiful landscapes, rich culture, and peaceful atmosphere. Ladakh is a Union Territory of India and one of the last places where Tibetan Buddhism is still widely practiced. It's dramatic scenery with windy valleys, sharp mountain ridges, old monasteries built on cliffs and is one of the best adventure travel destinations on earth. The Grand Traverse of the Indian Himalaya is a high-altitude trekking adventure through the remote and stunning landscapes of Ladakh and the Changthang Plateau.

This journey combines gradual acclimatization, cultural experiences, and a rewarding trek across High Mountain passes, beautiful lakes, and traditional nomadic regions.

ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. **(B, L, D)** refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. **Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**.

Day 1: Arrival in Delhi

Upon arrival in Delhi, you will be met and escorted to your hotel. The remainder of the day is available for rest following your journey or for independent exploration of the city.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 2: Fly Delhi to Leh 3500m

Drive to the airport for an early flight over the Himalaya to Leh. If weather permits, arrive in Leh early. Spend the day relaxing and acclimatizing (11,485ft/3,500m). We take a rest in the morning and in the afternoon there will be a short orientation walk around Leh and its bazaars.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Day 3: Sightseeing in and around Leh

Following breakfast, we set off on a morning sightseeing tour featuring visits to Phyang and Spituk monasteries, which are among the most renowned Buddhist temples in the region. We drive along the India Valley and the monasteries both contain ancient murals. We can experience the tranquil spiritual environment that exemplifies Ladakh's rich cultural heritage. Return to the hotel by the afternoon. The remainder of the day is at your leisure; you can choose to relax at the hotel or independently explore the surrounding area.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast



DAY 4: In Leh

Today we have an acclimatization walk around the Leh Valley, allowing your body to adjust to the high altitude. Visit Sankar monastery, followed by the peaceful Shanti Stupa, offering breathtaking panoramic views of Leh town and the surrounding mountains. Continue to the old Royal Palace, a historic nine-storey structure overlooking the city, and conclude the walk with a visit to Tsemo Gompa, perched atop a hill with sweeping views of the Indus Valley.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5: Drive to Rumtse & afternoon acclimatization walk (4218 m)

After breakfast, depart from Leh and drive towards Rumtse, a scenic journey of about 2.5 hours through the stark and beautiful landscapes of Ladakh. En route, visit the magnificent Shey palace, known for its giant copper-gilt statue of Shakyamuni Buddha, followed by the iconic Thiksey monastery, often compared to the Potala Palace for its impressive hilltop architecture and sweeping views of the Indus Valley. Continue to Rumtse, a traditional village and starting point for high-altitude treks.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Distance: 77 kms / 2-3 hrs drive

**DAY 6: Trek Rumtse – Kyamar (4590 m) (4 ½ hrs)**

After breakfast start your first day trek up the Kyamar Vally. We cross the river a couple of times but the walking today is fairly gentle as we gain height slowly. Our campsite is on a green grassy area – look out for marmots around the camp. The energetic can take an extra hike up a hill behind our campsite.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Hiking: 4 ½ hrs

Ascent: ↑ 366m

DAY 7: Cross the Kyamari La (5142m) and the Mandalchan La (5233m) to Tisaling (5040m)

A tougher day today as we cross 2 high passes. The trail zig zags gradually to the top of the Kyamari La. The effort is worth it for the stunning views of the mountains all around us. We descend a short while to our welcome lunch break. After lunch, we have a shorter climb to the Mandalchan La at 5233m. Again we have spectacular views of the beautiful colours of the barren Ladakh

mountains. A short descent brings us to our camp at Tisaling.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Hiking: 7-8 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 558m

Decent: ↓ 300mt

DAY 8: Cross the Shibuk La (5293m) to Pongonagu (4550m)

Today's trek follows a well-defined trail that gradually gains elevation as you ascend towards Shibuk La. The climb is rewarding, offering ever-expanding views of the surrounding high-altitude landscape. From the pass, enjoy a spectacular panoramic view of the shimmering Tso Kar Lake, set against the vast Changthang plateau. After spending some time at the pass, and begin the descent towards Pongonagu, located close to the shores of Tso Kar Lake. This region is renowned for its rich wildlife, providing excellent opportunities to spot migratory birds, kiang (Tibetan wild asses), marmots, wolf and Tibetan antelope.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Hiking: 6 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 377m

Decent: ↓ 666mt



DAY 9: Ponganagu to Nuruchan (4650m)

Continue your trek along the western shore of the stunning Tso Kar Lake, a stunning blue salt lake and a unique high-altitude wetland known for its rich birdlife. Keep an eye out for rare species such as black-necked cranes and Brahminy ducks, often seen feeding along the lake's edges. Tso Kar is famously known as the "White Lake" due to the thick salt deposits that line its banks. The trail offers an easy walk through this vast open landscape before gradually leading you to the campsite at Nuruchan.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Hiking: 5-6 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 173m

Decent: ↓ 145mt

DAY 10: Cross the Horlam Konke La (4967m) to Rajung and the Kyamayuri La (5435m) to Gyame Barma (5200 m)

Today is a long yet highly rewarding trekking day as you cross two high mountain passes - Horlam Kongke La & Kyamayuri La. The trail climbs steadily through wide valleys and rugged terrain, offering dramatic views of the surrounding peaks and high-altitude landscapes. Along the way, you are likely to encounter local nomad families moving with their herds of yaks, sheep, and goats, providing a fascinating glimpse into the traditional Changthang way of life. After crossing Kyamayuri La, the route descends gradually towards Gyame Barma, a beautiful campsite set in an open valley.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Hiking: 7-8 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 855m

Decent: ↓ 339m



DAY 11: Gyame Barma – Gyame La (5400m) to Gyame (5120m)

Today's trek is relatively short and gentle, making it a pleasant conclusion to the journey. From Gyame Barma, the trail ascends gradually to the Gyame La, offering lovely views of the surrounding valleys and mountain ridges. After crossing the pass, begin a scenic descent into the Gyame Valley, where the nomads bring their animals to graze in the summer months. Overnight stay at camp.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Hiking: 3 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 213m

Decent: ↓ 251m

DAY 12: Cross the Yalung Nyau La (5450m) to Korzok (4570m)

Today marks one of the most spectacular days of the trek as you cross Yalung Nyau La, the highest pass of the entire journey. The ascent is gradual but rewarding, leading to breathtaking panoramic views. From the top of the pass, enjoy a magnificent first view of the deep blue waters of Tso Moriri Lake, framed by snow-capped peaks and vast open plains. Begin the descent towards Korzok village, walking through a wide barren valley with views of the Mentok range to the right and Lungser and

Shamser Kangri ahead. Arrive at Korzok, a traditional high-altitude village located on the banks of Tso Moriri Lake. The evening is free to relax and soak in the serene atmosphere of this remote. Overnight stay at camp.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Trek Distance: ---/ 5-6 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 300m

Decent: ↓ 905m

DAY 13: Drive from Korzok to Leh

After breakfast, depart from Korzok, bidding farewell to the serene surroundings of Tso Moriri Lake. Drive back to Leh, passing through vast high-altitude plains, remote villages, and dramatic mountain landscapes that define the Changthang region. Enjoy the scenic journey with photo stops along the way. Arrive in Leh in the late afternoon and check in to your hotel for that welcome hot shower.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Distance: 230 kms / 6-7hrs

DAY 14: Fly from Leh to Delhi

A memorable flight across the Himalayas and a dramatic end to our adventures in Ladakh.

(Please note – there is not much time to explore Leh at the end of the trip. If you would like additional days in Ladakh please let us know and we can arrange your flight and accommodation).

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15: Depart Delhi

Depart Delhi or extend your trip. Optional extensions include visiting the Taj Mahal or exploring more of Delhi. International flights should ideally depart after 14:00 for possible flight delays from Leh.

Meals: Breakfast

COST

£2050 per person (minimum group size 7 pax)

Single supplement: £390

PRICE INCLUDES

- All airport transfers and ground transportation as per the itinerary
- Domestic flights: Delhi – Leh – Delhi
- Hotel accommodation in Delhi and Leh on a twin-sharing basis with breakfast
- Fully supported trek with camp accommodation throughout the trekking days
- All meals during the trek (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Experienced English-speaking trekking guide
- Support staff including cooks, helpers, and porters/pack animals as required
- All necessary camping equipment (tents, kitchen tent, dining tent, toilet tent, sleeping mats)
- Inner Line Permits and trekking permits for Ladakh and Changthang regions
- Entrance fees for monasteries and sightseeing as per itinerary
- First-aid kit and oxygen cylinder carried by the support team
- Comprehensive logistics and on-ground coordination throughout the journey

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights to Delhi
- India Visa
- Personal travel insurance
- Extra meals in Delhi and Leh, as detailed in the itinerary
- Optional sightseeing tours in Delhi
- Tipping for drivers/hotel staff/guides/trek support team/leader
- Personal expenses such as laundry, drinks etc
- Hire of sleeping bag and down jacket in Leh
- Any expenses caused by reasons beyond our control such as roadblocks, weather conditions, natural calamities, flight cancellations and rescheduling, delays etc

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

The trip starts and ends in Delhi. Transfers are provided on arrival from Delhi airport to the hotel in Delhi and on departure from the hotel in Delhi to the airport. Please let us know your flight details so we can pass this on to our local partner.

ACCOMMODATION

- 2 nights in a 3-star hotel in Delhi on bed and breakfast. We usually use the Regent Grand Hotel.
- 4 nights in the Glacier View Hotel in Leh on bed and breakfast.
- 8 nights are spent camping. Camping is full service. Tents and foam mattress are provided. We have a full camp crew of guide, cook and camp assistants who will do all the camping chores. Ponies will carry the loads and ponymen will load and unload the ponies.
- All accommodation is on a twin share basis. If you would like a single room and tent there is a single supplement of £390.
- If you would like extra nights in the hotel in Delhi at the start or end of the trip, or you would like to fly to Leh early or have extra time in Ladakh, please contact us for details

VACCINATIONS: INDIA

- There are no required vaccinations. However, you may want to consider vaccinations for tetanus, hepatitis A, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, rabies and tuberculosis. The risk of malaria is slight, but you may wish to consult your doctor or travel clinic for further advice.
- Additionally, dengue, a viral disease spread by mosquitoes, is a known risk in India. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available, so we strongly recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.
- In regions over approximately 6,560ft (2,000m), there is little risk of mosquito-borne diseases. For trips above 9,840ft (3,000m), there is a risk of being affected by acute mountain sickness. Our itineraries are designed to enable everyone to acclimatise to these altitudes, but you should be aware that it is still possible for you to be affected.
- For more information the website of the National Travel Network and Centre has very good information. **www.travelhealthpro.org.uk**

CLIMATE

During July and August, the temperature in Delhi will be hot (35°C) and humid. In Ladakh the summer is usually hot and dry. Temperatures can get to 25°C-30°C, with nighttime down to about 10°C. At our highest camps it will be cooler and nights can be as low as minus 5°C at base camp. Summit night will be cold as we start around 1 am. At high altitude, the sun has a very strong effect. Ladakh is not normally affected by monsoon, and we can usually expect stable weather. However, mountains do generate their own weather systems, and some rain or snowfall cannot be ruled out.

DIFFICULTY RATING

This is a challenging trek at high altitude. You need a decent level of fitness and previous experience of trekking over 4000m would be useful. We recommend you do as much walking as possible before the trek and wear the boots you will be hiking in, so they are worn in and comfortable.

EATING AND DRINKING

India is famous for food and there is ample chance to try various Ladakhi favourites, which are often influenced by the cuisines of Tibet and China thanks to the passing Silk Road traders of yesteryear. Momos (filled dumplings) and yaks cheese are popular. Other favourites (but there are plenty more) are: thukpa, a clear vegetable soup with noodles and mutton, chicken or yak meat; tingmo (pronounced tee-mo), a steamed bread eaten with dal; and chutagi, a thick soup of local vegetables with bow tie-shaped pieces of dough cooked in broth (also served with meat).

Allow about £25/30 per day for lunch and dinner, where it is not included. You can eat out very cheaply in India, but if you go to the more expensive restaurants most of the time, you will spend more than the suggested amount. Please note, service in restaurants can be quite slow. Tea and soft drinks are very cheap. A large bottle of beer is approximately 300 rupees.

While camping, staff bring a hot drink (t & coffee) to your tent each morning. When you reach camp in the afternoon, tea/coffee/hot chocolate and cake/biscuits are served. At breakfast, dinner and in the afternoons, there is a choice of hot drinks. Breakfast typically includes cereal, toast and jam, eggs and porridge. Lunch on trek is usually served as a picnic en route (except on shorter days when it is in camp). Lunch and dinner typically include soup to start, followed by a variety of hot dishes (both local and Western) such as potatoes, vegetables, curry, pasta, rice, dahl and paneer (cottage cheese). At dinner, a dessert such as finned fruit and custard, fritters or cake is also served.

Dietary requirements can be catered for – please advise in advance.

MONEY AND TIPPING

The currency in India is the Indian Rupee (INR). You can change money in Delhi and Leh. There are ATM machines in Delhi and in Leh, but please note that often they do not work, or they are empty. We advise you to bring at least half the money you will need in cash (if not all). You will need money for lunches and dinners in Delhi and Leh, a small amount for entry fees in Leh, incidentals such as drinks and snacks plus tipping. We suggest that you allow £150 for tipping for the whole trip. Your leader will advise on tipping for Delhi and Leh and the trek. All tipping (including the leader) is of course at your discretion.

ALTITUDE

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m.

TRANSPORT

We fly from Delhi to Leh and use buses, jeeps or taxis for the sightseeing round Leh and the journey from Leh to the start of the trek and from the end of the trek to Chandigarh. We use an air conditioned carriage on the train from Chandigarh to Delhi.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

We have an excellent record of staying fit and well in India. The key seems to be our enthusiasm for Indian vegetarian food, (most of India is vegetarian), and care with water, peeling fruit, avoiding salads etc.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We recommend you buy travel insurance as soon as you book. Please check it covers you to the maximum altitude the trip goes to (6070m) and covers you for the use of ice axe and crampons and walking roped up. We recommend you carry a copy (paper or on your phone) of the policy and make sure you have the 24hr medical emergency telephone numbers. Your leader will need to check your insurance details.

INDIAN VISAS

You will need an Indian visa. CLIENTS NEED TO APPLY FOR NORMAL TOURIST VISA (E VISA)

You can apply within 30 days of travel for (30 days visa) AND 120 days prior for (365 days visa)

You will need to ensure you have a valid passport to travel to India and the best way to apply is using the official Indian Government website link here

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>



What do I need to bring?

- You will need one piece of luggage which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag which weighs a maximum of 15kg for the ponies to carry throughout the trek.
- You will carry your own day pack on trek with waterproofs, water, snacks etc – a 35/50- litre day pack is suggested for this trip.
- On the flights to and from Leh there is a baggage limit of 15kg for hold baggage and an additional 7kg for cabin baggage.
- The hotels in both Delhi and Leh will store luggage free of charge.
- Some items can be hired in Leh (see below).

The following items are essential and we recommend you bring them

- Travel insurance policy (including the details of the 24 hour medical emergency telephone number)
- Daypack 30 to 50 litres
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -5°C)
- Hiking boots – worn in and waterproof with ankle support
- Trainers/sandals for river crossings and camp use
- Walking socks – thin and thicker for summit day
- Trekking trousers and shorts/skirt
- Long-sleeved base layers (merino wool is great)
- Leggings
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Warm jacket (at least 3 season)
- Sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen
- Gloves – thin and good thicker ones for the summit day
- Warm hat
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Water bottles 1 litre (x 2)
- Water purification - tablets/liquid/steri-pen device
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Travel towel (campsites are always by a source of water/river)
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Power bank, plug adaptor, chargers
- Toilet paper for the trek
- Snacks

You can hire the following in Leh (paid locally in rupees INR)

- 4 season sleeping bag INR 3,300
- 4 season down jacket INR 3,300
- Trekking pole(s) INR 1,100

If you need to hire gear, please let us know in advance.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

If you need any pre or post trip accommodation in Delhi or Leh we can book extra hotel nights. There is plenty to see and do in Delhi and Leh. We can change the dates of your flight to and from Leh if you wish to arrive early or stay longer.

We can arrange a trip to Agra to see the Taj Mahal or a longer trip visiting Jaipur and Agra.

Please ask us for details of itineraries and costs